(b) whether the Union Government propose to increase the number of coaches;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Union Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) ITDC is not operating its own coach service between Bangalore and Mysore. However, ITDC is operating a daily package tour between Bangalore-Mysore-Ooty-Bangalore by hiring a coach from an empanelled private transport agency.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The State Government/Corporation can operate tourist coaches between tourist centres depending on the viability of the routes.

Testing of Food Samples

2543. SHRI PARASRAM BHARDWAJ : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have any independent Quality Control Laboratory for testing food samples, including foodgrains etc. from Public Distribution System;

(b) if so, the details of tests on random samples taken during each of the last three years; and

(c) the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) No, Sir. There is one Central Grain Analysis Laboratory (CGAL), New Delhi under the Ministry of Food for testing foodgrain samples for formulation of uniform specifications of different foodgrains from procurement purposes. However the foodgrain samples collected by quality control officers of the Ministry of Food from Fair Price Shops, are also analysed in this laboratory. In addition to above, there are 78 Food Laboratories in the States/Union Territories which are undertaking analysis of food samples covered under the statutory provisions of Prevention of Food Adultration Act. Four Central Food Laboratories at Ghaziabad, Calcutta, Pune and Mysore under the Union Ministry of Health are also doing similar work.

(b) and (c). The wheat and rice samples collected from Fair Price Shops are analysed in CGAL for physical quality parameters such as foreign matter, damaged grain, slightly damaged grain, broken grain, immature and shrivelled grain etc. During the years 1994, 1995 and 1996 (till June 1996) 91, 125 and 48 samples were collected respectively from fair price shops and analysed in CGAL, New Delhi. Wherever the samples were found substandard, the matter was taken up with FCI and concerned State Governments for immediate remedial measures. The information about the analysis of food samples including foodgrains analysed by PFA labs of the State Governments/Union Territories and 4 Central Food Laboratories is not being collected by Ministry of Food.

Backwater Tourism in Kerala

2544. SHRI N.K. PREMCHANDRAN : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of Kerala has submitted any plan for giving a special boost to backwaters tourism in Kerala;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the decision taken by the Union Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) to (c). Development of Tourism is primarily the responsibility of the State/Union Territory Government. However, the Department of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance to State/Union Territory Governments for specific proposals based on their merits, inter se priority and availability of funds. The Department of Tourism in consultation with the State Government has identified one project at an estimated cost of Rs. 10.00 lakhs for development of backwaters in Kerala for 1996-97. The State Government has to submit the detailed proposal for the project.

The Government of Kerala has identified Veli-Aakulam in backwaters as special tourism area for development and investment.

Bogus Ration Cards

2545. SHRI SANDIPAN THORAT : Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the strange phenomena of existence of huge number of bogus ration cards and a large number of rural/urban poor remaining without ration cards coexists;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the nature, magnitude and seriousness of the problem has been assessed; and

(d) if so, the action plan worked out to streamline the Public Distribution System for the benefit of urban/rural poor?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) to (c). In Revamped Public Distribution System